

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

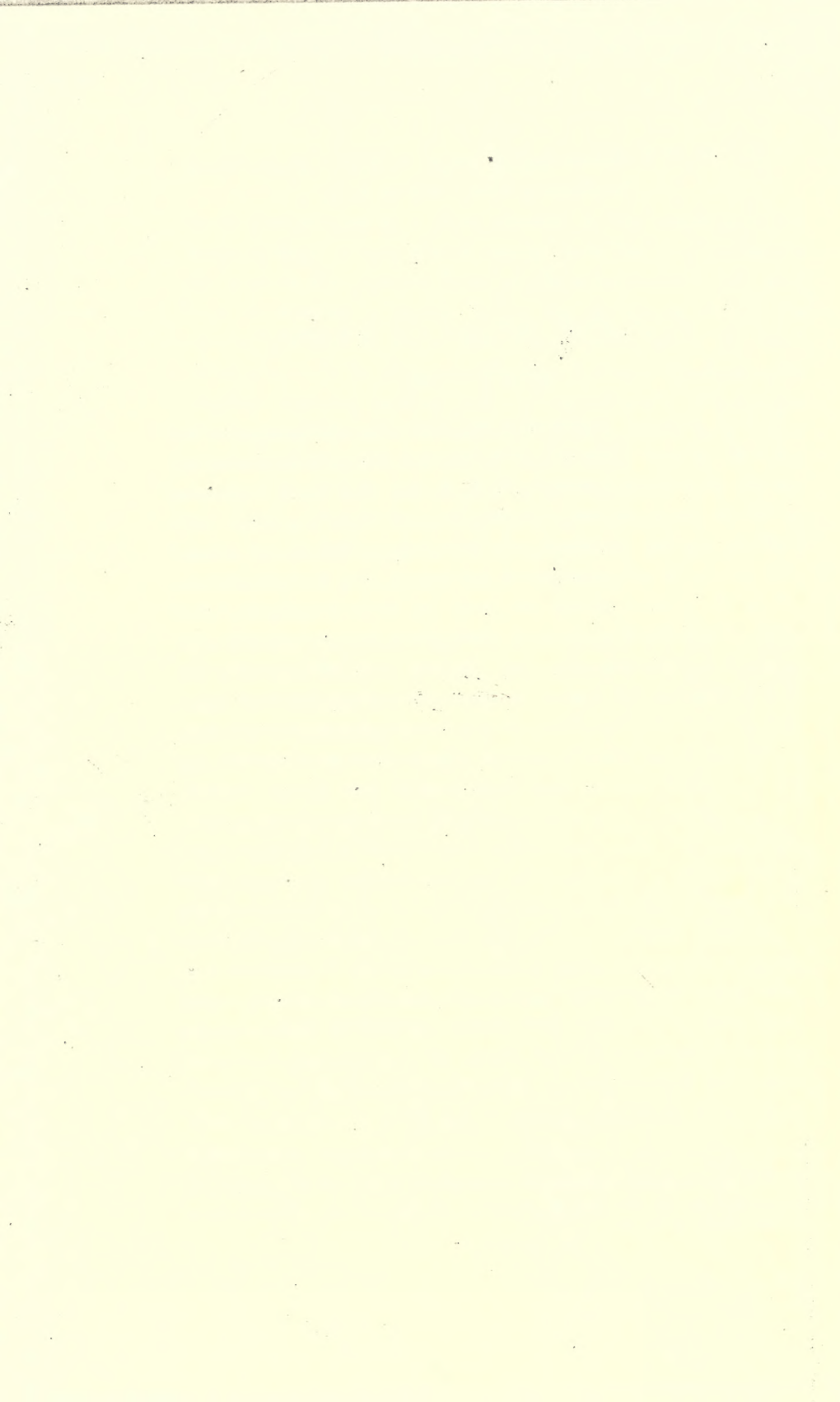


3 1761 00085400 0

Paton, Herbert James
Plato's theory of *εἰδωτά*

B
398
K7P3





28
7 P3
Meeting of the Aristotelian Society at 21, Gower Street, W.C. 1,
on January 16th, 1922, at 8 P.M.

V.—PLATO'S THEORY OF ΕΙΚΑΣΙΑ.*

By H. J. PATON.

IT is, I suppose, universally admitted that the portion of the *Republic* which deals with the line and the cave is one of the most important passages, if it is not the most important passage, for a proper understanding of Plato's position with regard to the problems of knowledge. Yet it is almost impossible to get a coherent account of this fourfold division or of the reasons which can have led Plato to make it. It is not uncommonly supposed that there is no fundamental difference between the two highest activities or between their objects, but many of those who recognize that Plato was sharply distinguishing the mathematical sciences and their objects from philosophy and its objects, yet fail to observe any similar distinction as regards the lower part of the division. They have no use for a distinction between *εἰκασία* and *πίστις*. To them as to the Sophist a shadow is as real as the object which casts it, and we find for instance the American critic Mr. Shorey boldly asserting that *εἰκασία* and the *εἰκόνες* are "playfully thrown in" for the sake of "symmetry." It is surely a strange reading of the character of Plato as a seeker after truth to maintain that in the very heart of his greatest work and at the very core of the problem of knowledge he should disturb and confuse those who are seeking to understand his doctrine with a little wholly uncalled for "playfulness" even though it should be for the sake of "symmetry."

* I must express my debt to Professor J. A. Smith who originally suggested to me the line of reflexion on this subject which I have endeavoured to follow.

It is strange that in a place marked by the suppressed but tense emotion of one who is setting forth the very essence of all that he has thought, there should occur without the least hint or warning a passage which has no counterpart in his thinking, which is at its best superfluous—and at its worst misleading. It is stranger still that in a later dialogue—*The Sophist*—the very turning point of the argument, the question of the possibility of error and of sophistry, should rest upon a similar meaningless distinction expressed in almost identical words. If we have any respect at all for Plato as a thinker we must put this down as grotesquely improbable; and the mere incapacity of the critic to understand his doctrine will not be for us a sufficient proof that there is no doctrine to understand.

The interpretation which we seek to uphold is that each of the four sections of the line represents a *different* kind of cognitive activity, and the objects of these different activities are *different* objects.

To establish this we must hark back to the argument which comes immediately before the fourfold division. We are trying to establish a distinction between *δόξα* or opinion and *ἐπιστήμη* or knowledge. *Δόξα* is supposed to be between ignorance and knowledge, and its objects are supposed to lie between the objects of ignorance and those of knowledge. To establish the distinction we consider the character of *δυνάμεις*, i.e., faculties, or better, powers. One power differs from another according to its different objects and its different function*—*ἐφ' ᾧ τε ἔστι καὶ ὁ ἀπεργάζεται*. The power of sight has the function of seeing and its objects are colours. The power of hearing has the function of hearing and its objects are sounds. Now knowledge, if it is really knowledge, must be infallible—this is very important—while opinion as it is mere opinion is fallible. That is to say—because the functions of the infallible

* 477 d.

and the fallible must be different—knowledge and opinion are different δυνάμεις, and therefore they have different objects. Such is Plato's argument, and whether we regard it as sound or not there can be no doubt that he accepted the conclusion.

Having established the necessity of difference in the objects we proceed to ask what these different objects are. The δύναμις of δόξα clearly lies between ignorance—which is of course simply nothing—and knowledge. It is as it were clearer than ignorance, but not so clear as knowledge. Its objects must lie between the objects of ignorance and the objects of knowledge. Now the objects of ignorance which is nothing are themselves nothing, or simply what is not. We cannot philosophically speaking be ignorant about *anything*. Ordinary statements of that kind imply some sort of cognition of an object in some sense real. Ignorance is mere blankness or darkness and it cannot have an object. Its objects literally do not exist.

The objects of knowledge on the other hand are the truly real—τὸ παντελῶς ὃν παντελῶς γνωστόν. They are the εἶδη or true universals—the self-sufficient, self-dependent, perfect, timeless, intelligible realities, which are, and are what they are, and are never other than they are. What then are the objects of δόξα? We expect them to lie between what is not—the object of ignorance—and what is—the object of knowledge. We find them in the world of τὰ γιγνόμενα, the things of sense and change, things which are never themselves, but are continually passing over into something else, things which in a sense are and in a sense are not, “tumbling about between being and not-being.” It is in this sphere that we find what we are seeking. These objects are between the objects of ignorance and the objects of knowledge. They have a greater clearness and reality than that which is merely a blank nothing, but they have far less clearness and reality than the real intelligible objects which we grasp by reason apart from sense.

Clearly, then, for Plato—whether he was right or wrong—

the objects of *δόξα* are very different from those of *ἐπιστήμη*. This difference is the greatest difference possible. The objects of the different *δυνάμεις* of seeing and hearing were, we saw, different. We see colours and we hear sounds. But this difference is as nothing to the difference of the objects of opinion and knowledge. In comparison with this second difference these minor differences become negligible. In comparison with this second difference seeing and hearing and their objects become similar, and we class them both under the *δύναμις* of *δόξα*, which is opposed to the *δύναμις* of *ἐπιστήμη*.

Consider now our subsequent procedure. We take a line stretching, as from the allegory of the cave we may guess, from darkness into light. We divide it in two unequal sections, the first of which is *δόξα* and the second *ἐπιστήμη*. The first section, that of *δόξα*, is presumably the shorter as having less reality. We then subdivide these two sections in the same proportion, which gives us in the first section the smaller division of *εἰκασία* and the larger division of *πίστις*, and in the second section the smaller division of *διάνοια* and the larger division of *νόησις* or *ἐπιστήμη* proper. We thus establish a mathematical proportion, $\text{δόξα} : \text{ἐπιστήμη} = \text{εἰκασία} : \text{πίστις} = \text{διάνοια} : \text{νόησις}$ or *ἐπιστήμη* proper. Again, keeping to the same terminology (though Plato varies), $\text{εἰκασία} : \text{διάνοια} = \text{πίστις} : \text{νόησις}$. Note further* that this proportion holds not only between the activities, but between *their objects*. *Οὐσία* or being, the object of *ἐπιστήμη* : *γένεσις* or becoming, the object of *δόξα* = *ἐπιστήμη* : *δόξα*. Plato expressly refrains from drawing out the proportions between the subordinate divisions* and *their objects*, *τὴν ἐφ' οἷς ταῦτα ἀναλογίαν* in order to avoid many words. Surely that is to say clearly that this proportion certainly exists.

What are we to make of these proportions? Clearly that what we can say of the relations of *ἐπιστήμη* and *δόξα* and

their objects, can be said also in a different degree of the relations of the subordinate divisions and their objects. Now, in the first place, we have shown that the objects of *ἐπιστήμη* and *δόξα* are different from one another; and therefore it is probable that the objects of the subdivisions are also different from one another. Further, as *ἐπιστήμη* is clearer than *δόξα* and its objects are more real than those of *δόξα*, so the power of each division is clearer than the power of the division which precedes it, and the objects of each power are more real than the objects of the power which precedes it. That is to say, we are mapping out in the first place the different cognitive powers of the human spirit, the different forms in which it is manifested, the different stages by which it passes to full knowledge. And we are also mapping out the *different* objects of these *different* powers. The difference of the powers goes side by side with a difference in the objects. The principle is stated clearly by Aristotle, *Nic. Eth.*, 1139 a b: "For to generically different objects must correspond generically different parts of the soul, if as we hold, it is in virtue of some kind of likeness or kinship that we are able to know them." *Πρὸς γὰρ τῷ γένει ἕτερα καὶ τῶν τῆς ψυχῆς μορίων ἕτερον τῷ γένει τὸ πρὸς ἑκάτερον πεφυκὸς εἶπερ καθ' ὁμοιότητά τινα καὶ οἰκειότητα ἢ γνῶσις ὑπάρχει αὐτοῖς.*

The difference in the powers is, as we have seen, a difference in clearness. What is the difference in the objects? It is a difference in reality, or what is for Plato the same thing, a difference in intelligibility (ἀλήθεια). Everything that is and is known is of course in a sense real. The wildest dreams and the most absurd delusions in some sense are. But within this real we find different kinds or degrees of reality. We separate the whole real first of all into τὰ ὄντα on one side (the things which in a special sense are, and are real and intelligible), and τὰ γιγνόμενα on the other (the things for ever changing, tumbling about between what is and what is not). Within τὰ ὄντα we make a further subdivision into τὰ μαθηματικά, the

objects of *διάνοια* or the mathematical sciences, real indeed in comparison with the changing objects of sense, but unreal in comparison with the *εἶδη*, the true realities, the objects of *νοήσις* or *ἐπιστήμη* proper. So within τὰ γινόμενα we make a similar subdivision, the *εἰκόνες* or shadows or reflexions in some sense real, but unreal in comparison with the objects of *πίστις*, the actual animals, plants, and manufactured articles among which we lead our waking life. The thesis which we seek to maintain is that this lower division is in no sense less important or less significant than any of the other divisions, and that it indicates our first objects and our first activity in our difficult path towards the real.

But before we proceed to attempt a justification of this view we may be asked what is the relation between these so-called different activities, and again between these so-called different kinds of objects, and how is it ever possible to pass from one to the other. Our reply is, in the first place, that we have to determine what Plato meant before we can pass on to criticize his meaning; and, in the second place, that we shall try to deal with these difficulties in regard to the special section which we are attempting to consider. Yet we may say here that although the general relation between the different kinds of object is of course a special and unique form of relation, we may describe it variously and inadequately and metaphorically as the relation of the sign to the thing signified, the symbol to the thing symbolized, the relation of the appearance to the reality, or, though not in the scientific sense, of the effect to the cause. The relation is apparently not identical for the objects of the different sectors, but the analogy or parallelism always holds. The relation between the objects of *εἰκασία* and those of *πίστις* is given (*Republic*, 510 *a*) as τὸ ὁμοιωθὲν πρὸς τὸ ᾧ ὁμοιώθη, i.e., the relation of the copy to the original. In the cave it is described as the relation of the shadow or reflexion to the thing which casts it, and the same view is suggested by the theory of *μίμησις* in the tenth Book. In 511 *a* a similar relation is said

to exist between the objects of πίστις and those of διάνοια. The objects of πίστις which have images or copies of themselves under εἰκασία are themselves only images or copies of the objects of mathematics, and of course it is a commonplace that all γιγνόμενα are like the εἶδη or are copies of the εἶδη. Still we must remember that all this is metaphorical, and if taken too literally is misleading and even false. Plato himself shows this in the *Parmenides* as regards the relation between the γιγνόμενα and the εἶδη. If it holds literally at all, I think it holds between the actual changing individuals which are the objects of πίστις and the more real unchanging individuals which are the objects of διάνοια. This is possibly suggested by the fact that if our proportion is to hold, the second segment of the line must be the same size as the third segment. But perhaps this is to press too far what may merely be an accident without any definite philosophical meaning.

Summing up our advance so far, we have discovered with reasonable certainty the general principles of the fourfold division—a difference of power involving a difference of objects. This is fully borne out by the allegory of the cave. Further proof or confirmation can only be obtained by considering what the objects are and how they are different. To do so as regards any two of the subdivisions will, of course, in itself immensely increase the probability as regards the other two subdivisions, that is to say in our case if we can show that the objects of διάνοια and of ἐπιστήμη proper or νοήσις are different, *i.e.*, if the objects of mathematics and those of philosophy are different, we have indefinitely added to the presumption that the objects of εἰκασία and πίστις are also different. Needless to say we hold very definitely that the objects of διάνοια and ἐπιστήμη are in Plato's view different, as Aristotle expressly said, and that Plato was right in thinking so. But for this purpose at present we can only refer to the limited justification in Adam's Edition of the *Republic* and also to some remarks in Burnet's *History of Greek Philosophy*.

We pass then to our special discussion of *εἰκασία* and the objects of *εἰκασία*, and of how they differ from *πίστις* and the objects of *πίστις*.

Let us first of all sum up what are to be our conclusions.

Εἰκασία is the first ingenuous and intuitive vision of the real. Its object is simply what appears, *τὸ φαινόμενον*. It makes no distinction between the different levels of reality. For it there is no distinction yet made between the real and the unreal, or, if you prefer it, real and unreal do not mean anything to it. It is cognitive and has an object, but it does not affirm or deny: that is, it does not claim to be true. Truth and Falsehood, Reality and Unreality, Fact and Fiction, these are distinctions which have not yet arisen. It is identical with that *αἴσθησις* or Intuition of the first part of the *Theaetetus* which is supposed by the Sophist to be knowledge, but which cannot be in contradiction with any other *αἴσθησις* because it does not yet judge, *i.e.*, because it does not yet lay claim to what is called Objective Truth. There is no word for it in English but we may call it Imagination or the cognition of images, or again Intuition or the mere looking at objects.

Its object as we might expect from its derivation is the ✓ *εἰκὼν* or image. We must not, however, call it a mental image, in the dangerous language of modern writers on logic and psychology. Nor again may we call it a real image as opposed to a mental image. It is not subjective as opposed to objective nor objective as opposed to subjective. These phrases when they mean anything mean a distinction between the real and the unreal, and in this first stage of consciousness, examined as it must be from within, that distinction has not yet arisen. Still less can we say that it is mistaking the image for the thing, the unreal for the real. That is mere error, it is not *εἰκασία*. For *εἰκασία* we repeat again there is no distinction between the real and the unreal, and consequently there is no possibility of mistaking one for the other. There is no claim to truth, and consequently there can be no possibility of error.

We can now proceed to give an indication of its objects in detail, and if these appear to be of no metaphysical importance we hope to show later that this is not so. The images* are "firstly shadows, secondly reflexions in water and in things that are close grained and smooth and bright and all similar things" — *πρῶτον μὲν τὰς σκίας, ἔπειτα τὰ ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι φαντάσματα καὶ ἐν τοῖς ὅσα πυκνά τε καὶ λεῖα καὶ φανὰ συνέστηκεν καὶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτον.*

This is not further developed in the present passage as Plato is concerned with higher themes, but we learn from the tenth book that the artist also holds a mirror up to nature, and he appears to create† animals, plants and manufactured articles (the very things we shall afterwards find belong to *πίστις*) as well as the earth and the sky and the gods and all things in heaven and in the House of Hades beneath the earth, but in reality he offers us a mere *φάντασμα* or *εἰκὼν* of these things.

We find exactly the same view in the *Sophist*. We have on the one hand the things‡ made by God, not here the *εἶδη* as in the *Republic*, but animals, plants and inanimate substances, animals and their elements, fire and water and the like, and on the other hand we have the things§ made by man, houses and other manufactured articles. All this is of course the object of *πίστις*. But we must set against these the images made by God and the images made by man. The description is similar to that in the *Republic*. "The images§ made by God are the images or appearances (*φαντάσματα*) which spring up of themselves in sleep or by day, *e.g.*, a *shadow* when darkness comes in the light of the fire, or in cases where a double light, that external to an object and that belonging to it, comes together about bright and smooth objects, and creates a shape giving us a sensation the reverse of what we ordinarily see." *Τὰ τὲ ἐν τοῖς ὕπνοις καὶ ὅσα μεθ' ἡμέραν φαντάσματα αὐτοφυῆ λέγεται, σκιά μὲν ὅταν ἐν τῷ πυρὶ σκότος ἐγγίγνηται, διπλοῦν δὲ ἡνίκ' ἀν*

* 510 a.

† 596 c.

‡ 265 c.

§ 266 b.

φῶς οἰκεῖόν τε καὶ ἀλλότριον περὶ τὰ λαμπρὰ καὶ λεῖα εἰς ἐν συνελθὼν τῆς ἔμπροσθεν εἰωθυίας ὀψέως ἐναντίαν αἴσθησιν παρέχον εἶδος ἀπεργάζεται. Now whatever be the theory of reflexion in this passage it is clear that the things here spoken of—the images made by God—are the same as those of the *Republic*, the shadows and reflexions of real things with the addition of the objects which appear to us in dreams. The similarity of this to the doctrine and language of the *Republic* is in itself sufficiently remarkable. The addition of dreams is not in the least surprising in itself, and it is clearly suggested in the *Republic*, e.g., 414d, when in the myth of the three natures, gold, silver and bronze, Plato asserts that this early education of the guardians was just a dream below the earth and when he describes the φιλοθεάμονες* as dreaming. And we may note here incidentally for the complete parallelism of the line that as we in εἰκασία appear to be dreaming about γιγνόμενα, so the mathematician† is said to be dreaming, dreaming about τὸ ὄν—ὄνειρώπτουσι μὲν περὶ τὸ ὄν, ὅπαρ δὲ ἀδύνατον αὐταῖς ἰδεῖν.

So far we have the images made by God, but we have also the images made by man as in the tenth book of the *Republic*. Not only do we make real houses, but the artist will paint for us another house,‡ “which is a sort of dream created by man for those who are awake”—οἷον ὄναρ ἀνθρώπινον ἐργηγορόσιν ἀπειργασμένην.

It is this fact of the image made by man which makes it possible for us to track down the Sophist to his lair and to show the nature of error. Surely this would not be possible if the doctrine were of no metaphysical importance, and if we shrink from putting art under the first activity of the soul, we must not let this stand in the way of recognizing the truth. On this point also we shall maintain that Plato's doctrine is profoundly true.

We have now got as the objects of εἰκασία shadows and

* 476 c.

† 533 b.

‡ 266 c.

reflexions, the dreams of the sleeper, and the dreams of the artist.

Let us turn to the *Theaetetus* to perceive the common character of all this. Here we have a preliminary stage of consciousness set against thinking about the world, set against what is here called δόξα. This preliminary stage is called αἴσθησις, sense or intuition. It may be objected that we have no right to identify δόξα with πίστις and αἴσθησις with εἰκασία. The use of different words shows that we are dealing with different things. To this we reply that the use of different words shows no such thing. Anyone who is acquainted with the works of Plato is aware that in spite of the precision and consistency of his thinking he is not at all careful about what we may call terminology. Even in this particular part of the *Republic* with which we are dealing he varies his terminology—but never his argument—as far as we can see for no reason unless possibly for reasons of rhythm. Thus δόξα is first of all distinguished from γνῶσις or ἐπιστήμη using these words indifferently, e.g., 478c, 477e. Later, 510–511, he divides ἐπιστήμη into the subordinate divisions of διάνοια and νόησις. When he comes back to this in 534 νόησις is the word for the whole section with διάνοια and ἐπιστήμη as its subordinate divisions. Still more frequently of course he varies his language according to the particular point with which he is dealing. Thus in the *Republic* he speaks of the objects of δόξα as τὰ γιγνόμενα in order to mark them off as comparatively unreal from the εἶδη or τὰ ὄντα. This does not prevent him in the *Theaetetus* from calling the objects of δόξα τὰ ὄντα, i.e., real in comparison with the objects of αἴσθησις.

For ourselves we can only say with Plato οὐ περὶ ὀνόματος ἀμφισβήτησις. If he chooses to call the same thing by a different name, we shall not refuse to see his meaning.

Now it is clear that in the *Theaetetus* he is describing two stages in knowledge and two stages which are below the level of διάνοια and ἐπιστήμη. In the *Republic* and in the *Sophist*

(though we shall have to return to the *Sophist* later) he appears to set forth the same doctrine as to the two stages below *διάνοια* in much the same language. What more probable than that—especially if we are right in setting the *Theaetetus* between the *Republic* and the *Sophist*—the two stages described in the three dialogues are the same? If we find that the same doctrine is apparently taught about these two stages the change in the name will not prevent us from accepting it as one.

✓ The *δόξα* of the *Theaetetus* certainly appears to be the *πίστις* of the *Republic* and its objects appear to be the same, e.g., he mentions a wagon (*i.e.*, a manufactured article) as such an object. I do not think anyone will find difficulty in identifying these. But *αἴσθησις* may appear to be wider than *εἰκασία*. We do indeed get certain things classed under it which we might naturally expect to find. Thus we get what is before us in dreams—as we have had already in the *Sophist*—and also what is before us in diseases* generally and particularly in madness. So far we appear to be still in *εἰκασία*. But in addition—and this is our difficulty—we get the whole of *αἴσθησις*, the whole ingenuous unthinking vision of reality whether in memory or in imagination, and in addition, all that we ordinarily call pure sense, all *αἴσθησις* which does not as yet involve judgment.

What we suggest is this, that this general *αἴσθησις* or intuition is the same as *εἰκασία*, but we now get it described in more detail, and only now is the full extension and meaning of it made clear.

Note that this is exactly what we should expect from the purpose of the different dialogues. Both in the *Republic* and in the *Sophist* we are dealing with particular problems. In the *Republic* we are dealing with the character of philosophy and the training which must precede it. In the *Sophist* we

* 157 e.

are concerned with the nature of sophistry and error. In both we merely allude to our doctrine in regard to the first activity of the knowing mind in order to elucidate the point we have before us. There is no reason in either for giving us a comprehensive account of this activity for its own sake.

In the *Theaetetus* it is quite otherwise. Here we are primarily concerned with the lower stages only. I take it that the primary purpose of the *Theaetetus* is by an examination of these lower stages to show that they cannot give us knowledge. We are allowed to infer that we can only find knowledge when we come to the εἶδη, as any intelligent disciple of Plato would be sure to do. It is ludicrous to say that in the *Theaetetus* Plato gives up the doctrine of the εἶδη. That theory is implied all through. Yet just because we are not concerned with it primarily, but with the lower stages, we naturally get a fuller account of these stages than we get elsewhere.

In the first place then, what is the broad general character of this first stage of cognitive experience? It is called αἴσθησις, but this is neither the sensation nor the perception of the psychologist. It is rather, as we have said, the first ingenuous and intuitive vision of the soul whether in sense, memory or imagination as that is before thinking begins. We have here the bare or immediate object, presentation or appearance.

And secondly, what is Plato's doctrine about it? He appears rather to accept than to reject the sophistical account of it. About it he seems to urge three main points: (1) that we have other objects not got at in this way; (2) that if we consider it in this way apart from thinking it becomes simply what we should call a stream of separate unrelated images—i.e., what may naturally be described as the εἰκόνες which are objects of εἰκασία; and (3) that if in this the mind is merely passive the stream of images becomes simply the flux of Heraclitus in which we can find no foothold and in which it is impossible to have any object before us at all.

It is true, indeed, that he does not use the word *εἰκασία* or *εἰκών*. If we may hazard a conjecture this might be because here he is not concerned to show that the appearance is in any sense like the natural object, as the natural object is like the *εἶδος*—his great contention in the *Republic*. But he does identify *αἴσθησις* with *φαντασία** which is surely near enough for our purposes—and he speaks of the objects either as *φαντάσματα*† —a word which he uses alongside of *εἰκών* in the *Republic* and of *εἶδωλον* in the *Sophist*—or in one place as *φάσματα*‡—*φάσματα ἐν ἡμῖν*—a word which is, of course, used of the phantoms which appear in dreams. He also uses the word *πάθος*§ to indicate at least the comparative passivity of the soul.

Note particularly that *αἴσθησις* is not sense or sensation though it includes it. Its object is simply *τό φαινόμενον*, that which appears, and is what it appears, whether in dreams or madness, whether in sense, memory, or imagination. It is what is called “an idea” in the works of modern logicians, as in the phrase “The Association of Ideas.”

It is now that we begin to see its metaphysical importance and to realize that it was not without good reason that Plato introduced it into the *Republic*. It is often suggested by commentators that *εἰκασία* indicates no special and separate way of knowing, but there have been many philosophers who have held that it is the only way of knowing, and that nothing more is possible. It is what Hume, who understands it far better than its average supporters, calls the stream of impressions and ideas. By the agnostics of all ages from Protagoras to Hume it has been identified with the whole of knowledge, and its objects have been identified with the whole of reality. The world of appearances is everything, everything is what it seems and seems what it is. It is reality for me. There is no possibility of contradiction or of error. There is no such thing as Truth and no such thing as Philosophy. Memory, sense, imagination,

* 152 c.

† 167 b.

‡ 155 a.

§ 166 b.

and all that we call Thinking or Knowledge are on one dead level, and that is the level which is described by Plato under the heading of *εἰκασία*.

So far we have simply been trying to determine what Plato as a matter of fact classed under *εἰκασία*. We must now endeavour to understand why he did so, and this should enable us to grasp his position more clearly. We hope it will also enable us to justify it. It will probably be generally agreed, both that it is natural to class hallucinations, dreams, and perhaps even imagination under *εἰκασία*, and to consider these as offering us a special class of objects. Any doubts that are entertained about the reasonableness of Plato's position will most probably be felt (1) in regard to sense and its objects and (2) in regard to the activity and products of the artist.

But before going on to examine these two questions in detail it is necessary to state, more or less dogmatically, what are the objects and the activity of *πίστις*, in order that we may have a clearer understanding of the difference between *πίστις* and *εἰκασία*.

The objects of *πίστις* as indicated by both the *Republic* and the *Sophist* are the things made by God, animals, plants, and so on, and the things made by man, namely, manufactured articles, houses and chairs and what not. These are distinguished from the images made by God, shadows and reflexions and dreams, and from the images made by man, as, for instance, in painting. In other words, what we have here are real things, the things of our ordinary world. We prefer to call this the actual world, rather than the real world, for the word real strictly speaking, belongs only to the *εἶδη*.

The activity of *πίστις* is best called Judgment. "The soul," Plato says in the *Theaetetus*,* "when thinking appears to me to be just talking, asking questions of herself and answering them, affirming and denying. When she has arrived at a decision,

* 190 a.

either gradually or by sudden impulse, and has at last agreed and does not doubt, that is her opinion or δόξα," and we may add her belief or πίστις. Τοῦτο γάρ μοι ἰνδάλλεται διανοουμένη οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ διαλέγεσθαι, αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν ἐρωτῶσα καὶ ἀποκρινομένη, καὶ φάσκουσα καὶ οὐ φάσκουσα. ὅταν δὲ ὀρίσασα, εἴτε βραδύτερον εἴτε καὶ ὀξύτερον ἐπείρασασα, τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη φῆ καὶ μὴ διστάξῃ, δόξαν ταύτην τίθεμεν αὐτῆς. From the *Sophist* we get the clear statement, fully borne out by the general argument both of the *Sophist* and the *Theaetetus*, that the characteristics of Judgment are: (1) that it affirms or denies;* and (2) that it is true or false.†

Further there is present in it two elements—an element of αἴσθησις taken as identical with εἰκασία and an element of pure thinking.‡ This element of thinking may apparently be either the inferior thinking of mathematical διάνοια or the superior thinking of philosophy. It is this element which leads us on from πίστις to pure thought about τὰ ὄντα, and it is the combination of the element of αἴσθησις and that of thinking which renders error possible. False opinion lies neither in the intuitions in relation to one another nor in the thoughts, but ἐν τῇ συνάψει αἰσθήσεως πρὸς διάνοιαν, in the combination of intuition and thinking.§ This is fully borne out by the *Sophist*.

The activity then is Judgment. It is Affirmative or Negative, True or False. It involves an element of αἴσθησις and an element of thought. This element of thought grasps among other things οὐσία|| or being or reality, and this implies that it affirms or denies the existence of its object. Every judgment is an existential judgment. By thinking alone we are able to distinguish between the real and the unreal, between being and not-being—a distinction which does not exist for εἰκασία. And we now understand how the objects of

* 263 e.

† 263 b.

‡ Th. 194 b.

§ Th. 195 c.

|| Th. 186 e.

judgment are the ordinary things of the actual existent or so-called real world.

That is to say like *εἰκασία, πίστις* has under it many objects—and we must not narrow it down to the instances given by Plato in a special connexion in the *Republic*. It comprises all assertions which claim to be true as opposed to false, and all *γιννόμενα* which are actual and objective as opposed to unreal and subjective. It comprises in a word all that is not *αἴσθησις* on the one hand or pure mathematics and philosophy on the other. It is a posteriori or empirical knowledge, *γνώσις κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν*.* It includes all empirical science and all history as well as the ordinary judgments of the ordinary man, *τὰ τῶν πολλῶν πολλὰ νόμιμα καλοῦ τε πέρι καὶ τῶν ἄλλων*.

Having now indicated the nature of *πίστις* we may return with more insight to our two main problems in regard to *εἰκασία*: (1) the question of sense; and (2) the question of art.

The question of sense and its objects is exceedingly difficult, and we may be unable to thread our way successfully through all its mazes, but we note in the first place that this view is not so strange to the view of the *Republic* as might at first sight appear. In the tenth book Plato practically identifies the sensible appearance with the *εἰκόν* of the artist or the mirror. The artist is indeed said to imitate the bed made by the craftsmen, but that actual bed is one and yet it appears different from different points of view. There is a difference between what it is and what it appears,† *οἷα ἔστιν* and *οἷα φαίνεται*. Note incidentally how this bears out the complete parallelism of the line. As is the *εἶδος* of bed to the many actual beds in which it is manifested, so is each actual bed to the many appearances of it in sense. But note especially that these appearances of the bed to sense are called *φαντάσματα* or *εἰδωλα*.‡ It is these appearances to

* *Th.* 193 *e.*† 598 *a.*‡ 598 *b.*

sense, and not the actual bed, which are imitated by the artist, and these *φαντάσματα* or *εἰδωλα* are actually like the work of the painter. The appearances to sense are on exactly the same level as the shadows or reflexions or images whether made by God or made by man. Again in *Rep.* 602*cd* we get a clear confirmation of the view that all *αἴσθησις* especially sight is included under *εἰκασία*. We are given a simple case of the passage from the appearances to a reality or actuality behind them. Plato points out that so far as sight is concerned, things may appear bent in water and straight outside, a thing may appear concave when it is convex and convex when it is concave, and again if we have two things equal in size they appear different in size to the eye according as they are near or far away. These appearances we suggest are *εἰκόνες*, and so long as we take them merely at their face value, so long as we are satisfied with making them clear to ourselves and do not seek to go behind them, we are in *εἰκασία*. There is so far no question of error. The things do appear so. Every appearance is just different and that is all about it. But if we want to know what the thing actually is, we get at it by counting and weighing and measuring, so that not the apparent size, shape and quantity may rule in our souls but rather the actual size, shape and quantity determined by mathematical measurement or calculation—*τὸ μετρεῖν καὶ ἀριθμεῖν καὶ ἰστάναι*.* By this means we pass to *πίστις*, to the actual world of solid bodies—in fact to animals, plants, and manufactured articles. This means clearly that as far as secondary qualities are concerned—compare *Theaetetus*, 154*a*—we must always be satisfied with *εἰκασία* or *αἴσθησις*. They are what they seem and they may seem different to different men or to the same man at different times. But primary qualities are on a different level; in regard to them we can

* *R.* 602*d*.

distinguish between the merely apparent which is given to *εἰκασία* and the actual which is determined by *πίστις*.

And surely in this Plato is right. Like any other image or reflexion these appearances of sense are mere appearances. They are what they seem and they seem what they are. Each *δύναμις* gives us its proper objects, we see colours and we hear sounds, but *τὰ κοινὰ*,* sameness and difference, likeness and unlikeness, and above all *οὐσία* or being cannot be got through sense. Thus *αἴσθησις* apart from thinking has no part in *οὐσία*,† and therefore it has no part in truth. Clearly it must be classed not under *πίστις* but under *εἰκασία*, though there are certain difficulties which we will recur to later.

It is no use saying that the objects of sense perception are distinguished from those of dreams or imagination by following upon what is called an external stimulus. Apart from the difficulty of knowing what this means, we are here describing *εἰκασία* not from within but from without. We can indeed come back to *εἰκασία* afterwards with a knowledge of mathematical science and with an explicit metaphysic and we can distinguish its objects in this way, but *εἰκασία* itself knows nothing of external stimuli; for the first stage of cognition all objects are on the same level of reality, and it makes no distinction of less and more real within them. It is for this reason that Hume, that most consistent of all sceptics and that subtlest defender of *εἰκασία* as coextensive with the whole of knowledge, refused to distinguish impressions from ideas by reference to an external reality, and distinguished them only by less or greater degrees of vividness, though in so doing he ignored the fact that the images of our dreams are often more vivid than those of our waking life. It is also for this reason that Hobbes in the first chapter of the *Leviathan* informs us that "sense is in all cases nothing but original fancy," and again "their appearance to us is fancy the same waking that dreaming."

* *Th.* 185-6.

† 186 *e.*

We are now in a position to understand better the relation between the objects of *εἰκασία* and those of *πίστις*. It is only on the level of *πίστις* that we pass to the actual which is consciously distinguished from the apparent. The typical case of this is the determination of the actual primary qualities by some sort of mathematical measurement or thinking, *ἔργον λογιστικοῦ*, *R.* 602 *e.*

Into the exact character of this mathematical thinking we need not enter in detail—that would belong to a discussion of *πίστις* and we are primarily concerned only with *εἰκασία*. But it is not simply a matter of measurement. The actual size of any object we never can see at all. It can never appear to us in *εἰκασία*. The size of any object as far as *εἰκασία* is concerned is never twice the same. If it is far enough away it will appear a mere point, if it is near enough it will blot out the heavens. This applies as much to a measure, *e.g.*, a foot rule as to anything else. When we say that an object is a foot long we are not merely stating an equation between two infinite series, we are not merely saying that if we have the apparent object and the apparent foot rule in juxtaposition whether near the eye or far from it they always have the same apparent size. We do not think that either the foot rule or the object actually becomes smaller as it recedes from the eye. On the contrary, we think their actual size is unvarying and is always relatively in the same proportion to other actually unvarying sizes. This is believed to be the only reasonable theory capable of explaining our experiences in sense. When one reflects on the extraordinary amount of subtle scientific thinking involved in reaching this conclusion—thinking in comparison with which the discovery of the law of gravitation is mere child's play—and when one remembers that it is done by all of us in the first few years of childhood, one is impressed with a profound respect for the intellectual attainments of even the meanest of the human race.

This brings us to another point, that the objects of *πίστις*

as opposed to those of *εἰκασία* are wholly unperceivable, *i.e.*, they can never be given to us in sense. We have seen that the actual size of any object is unperceivable and that we can identify the actual size with no one of the infinite apparent sizes. The same obviously applies to all solid shapes whatsoever. If we take even such an elementary figure as a solid regular sphere we can certainly never see it. All we can see is an infinite number of apparent hemispherical shapes varying infinitely both in colour and in size. By thinking about these sensations we conclude they can only be explained by the hypothesis that behind them is a solid sphere unvarying in size and incapable of being seen, *i.e.*, that they are the many varying appearances of one solid sphere. When one comes to the theories of the scientists—who of course are only carrying on the same process more systematically—this becomes still more clear. The atoms and electrons of the scientist are believed in, but they can certainly never be seen.

Our view then is meant to be a defence of so-called realism, against the idealists of the Berkeleyan school, a defence of the ordinary man's belief in the existence of a solid and relatively permanent world of actual things in space. It is also an attempt at least partially to justify the claims of science to be true against those who hold—like Benedetto Croce—that science is a mere invention or fiction made by us for purposes of convenience. The actual solid bodies of ordinary consciousness and science are no doubt an invention, a construction—they are not and cannot be given in sense—but if their existence is the only reasonable explanation of our experience in sense and is the condition of our having such an experience, we are justified in believing in their actual existence and in rejecting the unworkable theory of idealism which involves itself in hopeless difficulties as soon as it tries to understand our experience in detail. On the other hand Plato is surely right in calling our cognition of such objects mere faith or *πίστις* and not knowledge. We cannot know *certainly* anything but an intelligible necessity,

which excludes of itself any possible alternative. This we are never in a position to assert positively either about the general theory that actual solid bodies exist or about any particular attempt to work out that theory in detail. And of course we must admit that the relation between our sensations and actual solid bodies—at first so simple—involves perhaps insurmountable difficulties, especially if we attempt to reverse the process of transition and to understand how ether waves or chemical changes in the brain can become for instance a sensation of red. But here we may be asking ourselves wrong questions or creating difficulties for ourselves, and in any case these difficulties are not greater than those which meet the idealist when he denies the existence of solid bodies altogether. Plato would perhaps put down these difficulties to the positively unreal and unintelligible character of all *γινόμενα*.

We would add here that these difficulties arise for the idealist—as for the realist—as soon as he tries to explain the possibility of communication between different spirits. A noteworthy instance of this is Croce's intolerably confused account of the extrinsecation of art. Nor is this an accident. Although in most cases the idealists appear to assume the existence of other spirits besides themselves, they have no real reason for doing so which would not equally justify them in assuming the existence of actual solid bodies. Both assumptions are a matter of reasonable faith and not of knowledge, and indeed they appear to be bound up with one another. We pass to other spirits by a kind of syllogism in the sphere of *πίστις*. These variously coloured appearances are, we say, explained by the movements of an actual solid human body. These movements in turn can be explained only by the volition of an eternal spirit. This appearance is the sign of a body. This body is the sign of a spirit. Thus we pass from heard sounds or seen colours to a spirit which is their source. The second stage of the argument involves some sort of philosophic thinking as opposed to the mathematical thinking of the first stage, but

it seems to depend on the existence of the first stage, and in any case the reasoning is of the same general character throughout. If we reject the first judgment, we ought logically to reject the second.

We are prepared then on our doctrine to accept the truths of the scientist as a matter of reasonable faith, but we are not without an answer to him when he goes on to maintain that these unperceivable objects—his atoms and electrons—are reality and the only reality, or when he stupidly denies the existence of spirit by what is nothing more or less than a contradiction in terms. We do not say that he is wrong in attributing to his atoms a greater reality and intelligibility than belongs to the things of sense and in holding that the things of sense are only intelligible in the light of them. We do not even say that the things of sense are after all in some sense real, and that what he calls his knowledge is only reasonable faith or probable hypothesis. What we do say is this. He has arbitrarily stopped in the soul's journey towards reality at a stage which can never satisfy the divine spirit of man, which can never be intelligible in itself and which is always in some sense unreal. He is satisfied with the *ἀγάλματα* of the cave as these are visible in the light of an earthly fire. His objects are still unintelligible and unreal. They are in perpetual flux and continually become other than they are. The source of their reality and intelligibility lies even for the scientist in something other than themselves, and he continues for ever in an unending process of explaining them as the effects of some cause which is itself equally unintelligible and unreal. The very relation of cause and effect he does not profess in any way to understand. His objects are still tumbling about between being and not-being. If he is to attain reality or truth he must continue the journey upon which he has only entered. Just as he sought the one unperceived reality behind the many appearances, the one relatively permanent body behind the many fleeting and transitory images, so he must again seek the one intelligible

non-spatial reality behind the many things of space, the one eternal reality behind the flux of bodies. Once more he must pass from the sign to the thing signified, from the conditioned to the condition, from his many objects to the meaning which lies behind and explains them—he must pass in short from the many to the one, from the changing to the eternal, from the unreal to the real, from the individual to the universal, from the *γινόμενον* to the *εἶδος*. This second transition he must make, not by the easy methods of counting and weighing and measuring, but by the more difficult method of dialectic—though he may be prepared for this, perhaps he must be prepared for this, by mathematics. And in this process he may never rest till he passes to the absolute one which lies behind and explains the many *εἶδη*, the unconditioned condition of all things, the one which is reality itself and more than reality, self-sufficient, self-intelligible, self-real—the Idea of the Good itself.

We have said enough on this topic at least to suggest the importance of Plato's thought. If our view is a right one, we have made good at least a plausible case for a real difference between the two kinds of objects, and what is more, we have by so doing established a most remarkable parallelism or analogy between the different segments of the line and their objects. To both of these points we shall return later, but at present we must pass to our second question, the question whether Art is properly to be included under this section.

Our first point is, that we have already answered the question in the affirmative. Until we have a reference to the actual world there is no distinction possible, as Plato suggests in the *Theaetetus*, between sense, memory and imagination. This view is fully confirmed by David Hume. We are only able to distinguish these from one another because we consider their relation to an actual world, sense having an actual object immediately behind it, memory having had an actual object behind it in the past, and imagination having no actual object behind it at any time. That is to say, when we come to *πίστις* and look

back upon *εἰκασία*, we can make certain distinctions within it, but from the point of view of the man in *εἰκασία* these distinctions simply do not exist. Imagination *quâ* imagination takes no account of the difference between the apparent and the actual and is therefore properly included in *εἰκασία*.

If we admit this in regard to imagination, we have admitted it already in regard to the artistic activity as a whole. For the function of the artist *quâ* artist is nothing more and nothing less than imagination, *i.e.*, the making images clear or express to himself. Art is not at all the communicating of these images by means of musical instruments or wrought stone or air-waves or chemical substances disposed upon a canvas. Art is the inner vision and the inner vision alone, whether obtained—as we say afterwards from the vantage ground of *πίστις*—in mere imagination or by hearing sounds from an actual instrument or seeing colours suggested by an actual canvas. The beauty of the vision depends solely upon its own internal character as an appearance, and not upon these subsequent irrelevant and non-æsthetic considerations. The artist is a dreamer or maker of dreams. His work is a dream made by man for those who are awake, *ὅναρ ἀνθρώπινον ἐγρηγορόσιν*.

The artist has surely all the marks of the stage of *εἰκασία*. He bids farewell to truth—*χαιρεῖν τὸ ἀληθές ἔασαντες*—and therefore to falsehood. He does not assert or deny anything, it is impossible to contradict him, what he says can only be called true or false by departing completely from the æsthetic standpoint. He is merely looking at his object and making it express or clear to himself. All these characteristics are precisely those which belong to *εἰκασία* and distinguish it from *πίστις*. As far as æsthetic considerations are concerned, it is wholly indifferent to the artist whether the originals of his *εἰκόνες* exist or not. He is satisfied with his appearance and with his appearance alone.

That this stage is the earliest in the development of the mind is borne out by experience. The savage and the child

alike are occupied chiefly with the life of sense and the life of imagination. Indeed, they are said not to distinguish clearly between what they see and what they imagine, which means of course that they have not yet got a secure hold upon *πίστις*. In the history of literature also it has been observed as a curious paradox that poetry precedes prose, and in general that art precedes science and history. This paradox we are now in a position to understand. On the other hand, we must not make too much of this confirmation from experience. In actual experience things are inextricably confused, and the temporal order is a very imperfect indication of the logical order.

So far we have been able to justify Plato's position, but it is only fair to add that there are certain difficulties in regard to his doctrine which we are not in a position at present to surmount. We have still to take into account the fact that Art is not passive, and that, although it must always be sensuous, it is not confined to objects which are given to us directly in what we call sense. The latter point I think Plato admits, although he is inclined to ignore it. His attitude to the former is not I think quite clear.

In regard to the former point that Art is not passive, we might naturally reply that sense is not passive either, but that it definitely involves an activity of the soul. There must be an immediate element in it, for otherwise we should have nothing before us at all, but, on the other hand, we must always have the activity of the soul in holding together the past and the present, and also in distinguishing and comparing objects, or once again we should have nothing before us at all. That is to say, in addition to the immediate element of sense there must be some sort of active intellectual element, an element which, although not reflecting upon likeness or unlikeness, sameness or difference, is yet making the objects or appearances clear to itself by an implicit recognition of their presence. Such indeed appears to be the argument of the *Theaetetus* in regard to *αἴσθησις*, that if you take it as mere sense you are reduced to

contradiction and absurdity. Plato there brings forward again his favourite argument that different powers have different objects, we see colours and hear sounds,* but just as we cannot see sounds or hear colours, so we cannot see or hear likeness or unlikeness, sameness or difference, oneness and manyness, and again being or value of any kind—the beautiful and the ugly, the good and the evil. In a word τὰ κοινὰ must be seen by the soul itself and without the aid of these, pure αἴσθησις is apparently impossible, though in *Th.*, 186 c, he seems to suggest the contrary. Instead, however, of going on to explain how these may enter into αἴσθησις without its becoming δόξα, he passes straight to an examination of δόξα, which we have so far identified with πῶστις. Obviously, however, if εἰκασία is the same as αἴσθησις, and if it is to remain distinct from πῶστις, we must give some sort of account of the intellectual element in it, and how that is possible without its immediately becoming πῶστις or δόξα.

However dangerous then the admission may be to our theory, we must insist that even in what we call sense there is an activity of the soul, and without this activity of the soul which recognises the implicit likeness and unlikeness of its seen colours and heard sounds, we could not have either seeing or hearing at all. The sophistical view which denies activity to the soul in sense we must simply reject.

If we take up this position in regard to what from the point of view of πῶστις we call sense, we must do so still more in regard to what from the same point of view we call art. In so far as art is and always must be sensuous it involves the intelligent activity of the soul which is necessary to distinguish its objects from one another and to hold them together in one whole. But art is more than merely sensuous. Plato, indeed, speaks as if the painter merely imitated or recreated one of the innumerable φαντάσματα or sensible appearances of a bed,

* 185 a.

but he also speaks of the tragedian as imitating a good or bad *ἦθος*,* although he insists a trifle grudgingly that it is very difficult to imitate a good *ἦθος*. However that may be it is clear from this and many other passages, and, indeed, from the briefest consideration of the history of literature, that art can imitate, or as we should say create, a good or bad character, which, of course, can never be given to sense at all. The artist can indeed imitate "all things† in heaven and in the House of Hades beneath the earth."

Hence it appears that when we have risen to the solid bodies and to judgments of value, we can fall back to the ingenuous point of view about them and dream about them as artists, so that they in turn become to us appearances or shadows, about which we ask no further questions. Even mathematical figures and philosophic universals may enter into *εἰκασία* so far as they help to express an individual character or situation. It is only because we have learnt to distinguish the apparent from the actual, and to understand our actual human life, that we can dream about individual intelligible characters as, *e.g.*, in novels and plays. It seems nonsense to say that the character of Hamlet is less intelligible to Shakespeare than the character of Julius Cæsar is to Mommsen. Art is still distinct from philosophy and history, but it has a comprehension of the universal in so far as that is implicit in an imagined individual character.

All this, however, does not alter or affect our main contentions in regard to *εἰκασία*. The dramatist is not asserting anything or denying anything any more than the musician or the painter. He makes no claim to truth, and, therefore, cannot be charged with falsehood. He is concerned only with his individual object, and for him the distinction between the apparent and the actual, or, again, between the *γυγνόμενον* and the *εἶδος*, cannot be said to exist. He is concerned with his

* R. 604 e.

† 596 c.

object, not as an instance of a philosophic truth, or as a reproduction of an actual fact, but as an appearance and an appearance alone.

The distinction in regard to the objects also remains. The artist is not dealing with the same thing as the historian, even when his characters have had historic originals, as, *e.g.*, in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. Shakespeare does not assert that, as a matter of fact, Mark Antony made his famous speech, or even that he actually was that sort of person. He is dealing not with the real Mark Antony but with a shadow or reflexion cast by him. The excellence of his work depends upon its own internal structure, and not upon its resemblance to actual historical events. If there is any merit in such a resemblance it would be a merit which was definitely not æsthetic. The only verisimilitude we have a right to ask from the artist is that his work should be like itself, *i.e.*, that it should be internally coherent, or, in a word, æsthetically good.

Again, in spite of what we have said of the implicit universal in art, and the necessity of its presence, if we are to have an individual object at all, the object of the artist is an imagined individual and an imagined individual alone. He is concerned only with making clear to himself the individual and unique lineaments of his immediate object, not with determining what actual object lay behind it and suggested it, nor with generalising about it, nor again with working out its mathematical implications or philosophic conditions. There can be no greater error about art than to imagine it begins with generalities or universals, or worse still with facts, and seeks to communicate them to us through the medium of individual appearances. The artists who do that are bad artists, or, in a word, are not artists at all. To the artist art is not the sign of anything other than itself. Rather it is wholly satisfying in itself. Whatever may be the logical implications of the work of art, whatever it may seem to be afterwards to the philosopher, the scientist, or the critic, for the artist is just this, this

unique and individual child of his fancy, and nothing else in the whole world.

We must indeed be on our guard against certain superstitions which throw doubt upon this doctrine. It is maintained for instance, that owing to the very constitution and character of language it can express only the universal and never the individual. If this were true it would indeed be fatal to our theory. Mr. Bradley, *e.g.*, *Principles of Logic*, p. 47-9, says, following Hegel, that we can never express the individual, even although he admits the extraordinary consequence that we always say something different from what we mean. The word "this" for instance he asserts to be a universal, which he curiously describes as a "*symbol whose meaning extends to and covers innumerable instances.*" But this is surely a confusion. The word "this" torn from its actual context and placed in order in the frigid pages of a dictionary may possibly be described in such a way. But living as it does in the actual speech of men, unique in its context and its tone, it does express its unique object and nothing else in heaven or earth. The same applies to all the words of the poet in the actual poem, whatever be the case with the quite other words of the grammarian and the lexicographer. It is ridiculous of the scientist to vivisect a work of art and then to complain that it is not alive.

The same considerations are a sufficient answer to the unimaginative people who declare that if you examine the words of a poem you will see that they do assert or deny something. Of course if you refuse to consider a poem as a unique and indivisible living thing, and abstract from it certain dead things which you call words with fixed meanings, you can say anything about this dead abstraction that you please. Any sentence in a poem might, in a different context, be an assertion of actual fact. That does not alter the fact that in its living reality it is nothing of the kind, but is simply the expression of a unique and individual *εἰκὼν* on appearance. If we wish to know

whether any particular expression is in *εἰκασία* or *πίστις*, we must take it not as an abstraction but in its full and living reality, and ask whether or not it claims to assert anything or to be true. If it does, it is not *εἰκασία* and it is not Art.

We may observe here that our theory, although it appears to offer an intelligible interpretation of the general theory of the line, is not without certain difficulties in regard to the language used by Plato in the *Republic*. These difficulties arise especially in regard to our contention that *εἰκασία* cannot be true or false, but is satisfied with appearances alone. It is only fair to mention what some of these difficulties are.

Firstly, he says, in regard to dreaming*—which we know to be *εἰκασία*—that it is thinking “that a thing which is like something is not really like it but is the same thing as that which it is like”—τὸ ὁμοίον τῷ μὴ ὁμοίον ἀλλ’ αὐτὸ ἡγῆται εἶναι ὃ ἔοικεν. He is referring to those who mistake the many beautifuls for the one beautiful. If this is to be taken literally it would be fatal to our position, but we must reply that it is a description of this stage not as it is in itself, but as it would appear to one who stood on a higher plane. The *φιλοθεάμονες* have not really made the distinction and confused between the things distinguished—that would be an error in *δόξα*—they have failed to make the distinction altogether and can only loosely be said to be mistaking one thing for another.

With a similar looseness of terminology he describes the poet as having *ὀρθὴ πίστις*† and *ὀρθὴ δόξα*‡ about his object if he obeys the person who uses the object imitated. That would strictly mean that the artist could have a false *δόξα*, which is impossible to him as an artist. Indeed we know that the artist cannot properly speaking have any *δόξα* or *πίστις* at all. If anything is clear in Plato that is clear, and when we add that he speaks of the user‡ of the thing having *ἐπιστήμη*, we see at once that he is not using the words in their technical sense, but is merely

* 476 c.

† 601 c.

‡ 602 a.

leading us up to the conclusion* that the artist imitates only appearances. He imitates a thing as it appears, generally, Plato suggests, as it appears beautiful to the many and the ignorant, but that even if it were true does not alter the fact that he is just imitating or creating an appearance and not judging it. In fact the reason why Plato is condemning him is just because he does not judge, he is blaming the artist for not being a scientist or an historian.

Again the allegory of the cave appears to suggest that most men are always in *εἰκασία*. Perhaps Plato actually thought they were, as he apparently thought the will of most men was mere desire or *ἐπιθυμητικόν*, which in our view is bound up with *εἰκασία*, as *θυμοειδὲς* is with *πίστις* and *λογιστικόν* with *νόησις*. Most men are satisfied with the seeming good and don't go behind it. On the other hand all men do go behind appearances to actual animals, plants and manufactured articles and are, therefore, in *πίστις*. If the allegory of the cave does not suggest this it is because no allegory can be perfect in all details.

Again in 516*c* we are told that the men in the cave ~~not~~ not merely look at present appearances, but remember past appearances and guess about future ones. This is probably the ordinary meaning of *εἰκάζειν*, to guess without real understanding. If Plato means a mere pleasant exercise of the imagination about what may happen in the future, this is quite properly called *εἰκασία*, but if it involves any claim to truth, it is really *πίστις* and we must put it down to the difficulty of making an allegory exact.

Lastly we may note Plato's statement as regards contending† in the law-courts about the shadows of justice and the images which cast the shadows, *περὶ τῶν τοῦ δικαίου σκιῶν ἢ ἀγαλμάτων ὧν αἱ σκιαί*. The philosopher who has been concerned with justice itself at first finds it difficult to

* 602*b*.† 517*d*.

talk about the ἀγάλματα of justice, *i.e.*, actual just laws and acts. But what are the shadows cast by these? They are perhaps the purely imaginative pictures drawn by rhetoricians and politicians not so much from a desire to mislead—that would be mere lying—but from a desire to please and to work on the emotions of the Great Beast. Incidentally this bears out our view that the artist is concerned not only with the shadows or appearances of actual objects in sense, but that all things in heaven and earth, historical facts and even philosophic truths may cast shadows with which the artist may deal. There are no limits to the objects of art except that Art is satisfied with making clear a mere appearance or shadow and does not ask about its truth or reality.

But we must pass on to a general summing up of our position, and a brief examination of the general objections to it. We began from Plato's argument about δόξα and ἐπιστήμη, and the difference of their objects; and from his insistence on the proportion between the smaller segments of the line and these two fundamental ones we suggested that the objects of the different segments must be different. These objects in the case of the two lower segments and especially in the case of the lowest of all we have examined, and have made out at least a plausible case for their difference both as regards sense and as regards imagination or art. We are of course prepared to do the same for the superior segments of διάνοια and νόησις, and, as we have already pointed out, success as regards the lower two segments indefinitely strengthens our case as regards the upper, and *vice versa*.

It must be observed further that, although we began from Plato's insistence on the proportion and inferred from it a sharp difference in the objects, our examination of the objects has, I venture to suggest, thrown a flood of light on what is meant by the proportion itself. We have come across a series of most remarkable parallels in regard to the different transitions involved in this account of knowledge. If Plato begins

with a sharp distinction between, *e.g.*, the one *εἶδος* and the many beds, nothing is more natural than that he should find a remarkable parallel in an equally sharp distinction between the one bed and its many appearances. The advance from *εἰκασία* to *πίστις*, like that from *δόξα* to *ἐπιστήμη*, is an advance from the many to the one. Similarly, the advance from *διάνοια* to *νόησις* is also an advance from, *e.g.*, the many mathematical ones which are *ἀεὶ ὄντα* to the one *εἶδος* or oneness itself. Each transition is towards greater reality and intelligibility, and each upper segment requires the presence of an element given by the lower segment, although it is not primarily concerned with that. Even in regard to the unfortunate use of *μίμησις* the object of *εἰκασία* does not imitate the object of *πίστις* any more than the *γυγνόμενον* imitates the *εἶδος*. These are mere phrases intended to lead the pupil up to a grasp of the true relation.

As regards the *δυνάμεις*, he appears to be arguing that they are really different: (1) as having different objects; and (2) as having different functions. That is to say, you may develop any one of them indefinitely—you may rise, for instance, from mere sense to the highest products of art—but you will never in this way pass into the higher *δύναμις*. Art could never become science or history, science or history could never become *a priori* mathematics, and *a priori* mathematics could never become philosophy. Each of the higher segments requires the previous one as its basis, but it must definitely make a fresh start.

Now it may be contended that such a view is derogatory to Art, and that such sharp breaks or transitions cannot exist.

As regards the first point, we must answer that it is not really so. Plato indeed was unkind to art, at least in the *Republic*, and some of his remarks appear to be both bigoted and stupid, though even here, what he attacks are the errors due to substituting art for philosophy or history, that is to taking

art as true. We must have the *φάρμακον** of knowing what Art really is if we are to avoid pollution. But whatever be Plato's errors in detail, his general position is in no way derogatory to Art. *Εικασία* is a necessary stage in cognition, all our material for thinking is given to us through it, and we must continually go back to it for refreshing and new life. We would add also, though Plato is less clear on this, that it is good and satisfying in itself. It is the opponents of this doctrine who are the real contemners of art, for by insisting on a gradual transition they would make art merely an inferior kind of history and philosophy, to be completely swallowed up and superseded with the advance in knowledge. This would make the value of art lie in something other than itself, in the philosophical or general truth that it conveyed or in the historical facts which it represented. Our view, on the other hand, can recognise the autonomy of this activity and maintain that the value of art lies in nothing other than itself.

As regards the objections to sharp breaks or transitions, we have already pointed out the danger of the mere continuum theory, the result that all the lower cognition would have to be superseded as worthless. We suspect also that it really involves ultimately a still more terrible disaster, the denial of all spiritual activity or growth, the reduction of everything to the lowest that we know. Plato's view, on the contrary, admits the possibility of real growth, the coming into existence of something new. More generally still, we cannot pretend to find much comfort in the philosophy whose ultimate principle appears to be that, after all, things are pretty much of a muchness. We suggest, on the contrary, that the world must be full of real differences, if it is really to be a unity, and not a mere welter, or chaos, or pure blank.

On the other hand we are not unwilling to make certain concessions. We recognize that there are real difficulties

* 595 b.

remaining both as regards our attempts to explain Plato's meaning and as regards our attempts to defend it. Yet we may suggest that our attempt to explain has at least one merit; we have not been afraid of supposing that he had a real meaning to explain, nor of risking the possibility of error in an attempt to make this clear. So many of the critics appear to begin with the assumption that Plato was talking more or less at random, and that they will sufficiently explain him if they talk more or less at random too. We can only say that we have tried to do justice to him as a philosopher, even if sometimes we may have misunderstood him as an artist. It is a form of offence which he himself would be likely to forgive.

As regards our attempts to defend we admit even greater difficulties. Plato certainly generally tended to speak as if there ~~were~~ were a sharp opposition between the *γινόμενον* and the *εἶδος*, but it is doubtful if this was really his ultimate view, and it is still more doubtful if it can ultimately stand. If we give up or modify this ultimate opposition, we must of course equally give up or modify our similar sharp distinction between the apparent and the actual. But we do insist that both in Plato's eyes and in reality, these distinctions have at least a didascalie truth. It is only by making them that we can lead ourselves and others up to the ultimate and true view which lies behind them. If we have not learnt them we have learnt nothing. Ultimately they may be necessary moments in every act of cognition or what you will, but even if we have still to find the unity which lies behind and explains these differences, we venture to express the belief that it will illuminate and not annul them, that it will explain rather than destroy.

B
398
K7P3

Paton, Herbert James
Plato's theory of *εἶδος*



PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY
